



Afternoon Alert - Friday, April 28, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most broadcasters led with a comment on North Korea made by President Trump in a Reuters interview released on Thursday night. The President said: "There is a chance that we could end up having a major, major conflict with North Korea. Absolutely."

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump issues stern warning to North Korea

Most TV networks highlighted a Reuter's interview with President Trump, in which he warned North Korea against continuing provocations by saying: "There is a chance that we could end up having a major, major conflict with North Korea. Absolutely." The U.S. leader also said: "We'd love to solve things diplomatically but it's very difficult." The President expressed hope that China will exercise influence over the Kim regime by saying: "I believe President Xi is trying very hard. He certainly doesn't want to see turmoil and death. He doesn't want to see it."

The broadcasters also took up Secretary of State Tillerson's interview with Fox News, in which he commented on China's role in the DPRK standoff by saying: "There is significant communication going on between ourselves and our counterparts in China. They confirmed to us that they had requested the regime conduct no further nuclear tests....We were told by the Chinese that they informed the regime that if they did conduct further nuclear tests, China would be taking sanctions actions of their own."

Admiral Harris comments on DPRK on Capitol Hill

NHK reported this morning on congressional testimony given on Thursday by PACOM Commander Harris, in which he commented on the escalated tensions in East Asia due to North Korea's ceaseless provocations by saying: "I think the crisis on the Korean Peninsula is real and the worst I've seen." The admiral projected that Pyongyang will acquire ballistic missile technologies that can reach the U.S. mainland in the not-so-distant future. Asked his view of whether or not Japan should procure a THAAD or other more advanced missile defense platforms, the Pentagon's top commander in the Pacific said: "It is something that the Japanese will have to decide in the future. I think they should."

The network separately reported on a speech in Washington on Thursday by Acting Assistant Secretary of State for EAP Thornton, during which she said: "The Trump administration has made it clear that this is the No. 1 national security priority." The official explained the administration's policy of building a "maximum international coalition" to curb North Korea's provocations. She expressed hope for China playing a larger role in defusing the tension on the Korean Peninsula by saying: "We are definitely looking at the Chinese, expecting them to step up and do a lot more than what they did in the past." She suggested that secondary sanctions may be imposed on Chinese firms doing business with the DPRK regime to support its nuclear and missile programs if Beijing fails to take action.

ASDF fighters conduct joint drills with carrier-borne aircraft

TV Asahi reported that two Naha-based ASDF fighters are currently conducting joint training with FA-18s deployed to the USS Carl Vinson over the East China Sea east of the main island of Okinawa in an apparent attempt to display the two militaries' cooperation in deterring North Korea's provocations. Two MSDF ships are also taking part in the drill. NHK ran a similar story.

Top government official calls U.S.-Japan relations "more rock solid than ever"

Nikkei took up press remarks this morning by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, who was asked about U.S.-Japan relations under the Trump administration, which will mark its first 100 days in office on Saturday. The GOJ official said: "They are more rock solid than ever." While referring to Prime Minister Abe's meeting with Vice President Pence in Tokyo earlier this month, the government spokesman stated: "There is no question that an ironclad U.S.-Japan alliance has been built as the two governments' North Korean policies were synchronized at a high level."

The Snowden Files on Japan: Part 2 – Privacy or security?

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported on the alleged top secret USG documents leaked by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden in 2013, saying that NHK was able to obtain 13 documents pertaining to Japan that were not disclosed at the time. The documents suggest that the U.S. used Japanese taxpayers' money for its intelligence activities, placed Japan under surveillance, and provided a special surveillance program to Japan. In the final installment of the two-part series the program reported on its exclusive interview with Snowden conducted in Russia, during which he

explained how the U.S. collects information and intercepts the communications of private citizens around the world. On the situation in Japan, Snowden cautioned: "Compared with other nations, Japan is a wonderful country that honors the freedom and privacy of its citizens. But that trend is changing. Japan has moved down in the global press freedom rankings. Democracy dies when there is no way to know the truth. You can have a free society only when your right to know is guaranteed."

The program also reported on a search engine interface called XKEYSCORE that allows people to search through vast databases of emails, online chats, and other information. Snowden declined to comment on whether the system was provided to Japan, but implied the possibility. Another former NSA employee told the network that the NSA must have provided a customized version of the system to Japan. MOD declined to comment on the matter. While noting that it was unable to confirm whether the system was provided to Japan, the program asked several experts if they think such a system -- described as "Google for spies" -- is being used in Japan. While some stressed the importance of collecting intelligence through such a system for security purposes, Journalist Akira Ikegami expressed alarm over privacy violations, saying that such activities could escalate and undermine democracy.

Abe, Putin paper over differences on DPRK, Syria to play up rapprochement

Nikkei reported that after their summit in Moscow on Thursday night, both Prime Minister Abe and Russian President Putin chose not to disclose to the press the details of their discussions on the situations in North Korea and Syria, probably in an attempt to highlight growing rapprochement between the two leaders for resolving the Northern Territories dispute. On the DPRK, the paper said it is uncertain whether the premier took issue with Russia's recent decision to open a ferryroute with North Korea, which the daily called a "loophole" in the international community's efforts to step up sanctions. Claiming that the world must have been curious about what the Japanese leader said to his Russian counterpart on Syria, the daily expressed regret that the prime minister simply stated: "The situation in Syria cannot be resolved without Russia playing a constructive role."

- **Gist of Japan-Russia ministerial joint statement** (Mainichi)
- **Cartoon: Abe and Putin** (Sankei)
- **Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-UK foreign ministerials to be held in New York on April 28** (Yomiuri)
- **Cartoon: Abe and Kim Jung Un** (Mainichi)

SECURITY

Trial of murder by Kadena worker yet to begin

Okinawa's two major dailies gave prominent front- and inside-page coverage to the first anniversary today of the murder of an Okinawa woman by a civilian employee at Kadena Air Base. Ryukyu Shimpo said the trial has not yet begun perhaps because pretrial procedures by the judge, the prosecutor, and the lawyer are taking more time than normal because of the foreign nationality of the defendant, who is charged on multiple counts, including murder and rape resulting in death. His attorney explained that he needs to spend many hours collecting from the U.S. and translating materials to prove that his client did not purposely commit murder. The daily pointed out that due in part to the trial delay, the victim's family has not been able to receive any compensation.

Okinawa Times wrote that although the USG and GOJ updated the SOFA in January to narrow the scope of the civilian component, doubts remain among local government officials and residents about its effectiveness in preventing misconduct by U.S. military community members. According to the daily, even central government officials are not sure about its effectiveness, with one of them saying: "It all depends on whether U.S. military authorities are able to supervise and control personnel properly. Japan has no choice but to believe they do."

According to the dailies, the victim's father released a statement saying: "I will never get over the grief of losing my daughter.... I will never forgive the defendant. We want him to be given the maximum penalty."

- [Moritomo scandal casting shadow on purchase of island for U.S. forces' FCLP exercises](#) (FACTA)
- [Kadena town council seeks ban on U.S. parachuting drills](#) (Okinawa Times)

ECONOMY

- [Foxconn Chairman Terry Gou visits White House](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan breaches annual quota for catch of Pacific bluefin tuna](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [BOJ says economy expanding for 1st time in 9 yrs, but cuts price view](#) (Kyodo News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 27](#) (Nikkei)
- [Ouster of reconstruction minister stalls Diet session](#) (Mainichi)
- [LDP factions warn members about "complacency" in light of minister's resignation](#) (Yomiuri)

- [Editorial: Abe administration must shed its complacency as Imamura resigns](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Make criteria clear for crimes subject to 'anti-conspiracy' bill](#) (The Mainichi)
- [LDP secretary general criticized for blaming media for politicians' gaffes](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Cartoon: Imamura](#) (Asahi)
- [DP senior official call for Renho to make clear dual nationality issue](#) (Sankei)

SCIENCE

- [Health Ministry to develop guidelines on anticancer drug treatment to study effectiveness in prolonging elderly patients' lives](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [New cancer guidelines eyed after study suggests drugs less effective in elderly patients](#) (The Japan Times)

SOCIETY

- [MHLW to publish names of companies suspected of violating labor standards law](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan stays 72nd on press freedom list but falls to last in G-7](#) (The Japan Times)